

Lesson 8 Article

Sermon on the Mount

The mad struggle for material possessions which so characterizes our world today makes these words of Jesus all the more relevant. The disciple of Jesus cannot let this materialism dominate him. He must major on “seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” The attitude of worry and fretting about what may happen tomorrow must not characterize the Christian disciple.¹

‘Treasures’ is literally ‘stores,’ so Jesus includes in His prohibition not only wealth, but those things which we human beings regard as our reserves, our security. The logic is simple: which treasure is the greater, the loan for a day now, or the gift for a lifetime tomorrow? The choice is yours. Likewise, you can spend your effort and concern on material things, whether for love of possessions or for imagined security or some other temporal value (a loan for a day), but always at the sacrifice of spiritual reward (a gift for life). It is simply a question of which you have more faith in: God’s word, or the gold which God’s word brought into existence!²

All of us have worried about the basics of life. When we reduce most of our anxieties to their lowest terms, we discover they involve fundamental things: where we live, what food we buy, what clothes to wear, what friends we have, what others think about us. In all these concerns, the issue for believers in Jesus Christ comes down to trust. Do you believe that you are in charge of your life? Or do you acknowledge that God directs and provides? Your answer has everything to do with your anxiety level. Have you ever watched a mouse running inside a wheel? The faster he runs, the faster the wheel moves—but he doesn’t make the slightest progress. He does not even have the sense to get off the wheel. That is what anxiety does to you. You run faster and faster, trying harder and harder to meet demands or prevent disaster—and still you do not have control over your circumstances. So when something does not go quite right, your frustration level continues to mount. There is a way off the wheel, however. God created you. He knows your deepest needs (Ps. 68:19). He longs for you to end the anxiety cycle and let Him lead (Matt. 11:28). First Peter 5:6, 7 says, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” The word “casting” is related to the Greek verb used in Luke 19:35, when on Palm Sunday the people of Jerusalem threw their garments onto a colt for Jesus to ride. The word describes the same motion: a deliberate action of setting something down and leaving it there. Jesus wants you to throw your cares on Him *and leave them there*. You depend on Him for life itself, and you acknowledge this reliant relationship by saying, “Here, Jesus. Take my problems. You have the answers! I trust You to show me what to do and to take care of the consequences.”³

¹ *The teacher's Bible commentary*. 1972 (F. H. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs, Ed.) (595). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.

² Mills, M. S. (1999). *The Life of Christ: A Study Guide to the Gospel Record* (Mt 6:19–24). Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries.

³ Stanley, C. F. (2005). *The Charles F. Stanley life principles Bible: New King James Version* (Mt 6:25–34). Nashville, TN: Nelson Bibles.